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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Impressions of Tallinn, Autumn 1953/Expansion of Lasnamäe and Ulemiste Airfields

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

Tallinn

2. "Tallinn, the capital, was hardly recognizable, compared to former times. Rehabilitation work and new building proceeds slowly. The few new buildings are either government offices or apartment houses for government functionaries. The half dozen new houses for the civilian population are barrack-like structures at Lasnamäe/Kopli that have been built by the larger plants for their workers. (The Cellulose and Paper Combine at Lasnamäe and the Volta Electric Motor Plant at Kopli, both subordinated to All-Union ministries).
3. "The greatest contrast to pre-World War II times is that at about 9 p.m. the whole town is as quiet as the grave. The streets are half-dark, lighted only by a rare lantern here and there. In the streets women are in the great majority. The men one sees all wear some kind of uniform or clothes reminding one of a uniform. The entire population is poorly, even miserably dressed, quite contrary to pre-World War II. Although Tallinn has considerably more inhabitants now, the traffic in the streets is insignificant. What one sees are military trucks, official cars and, now and then, a horse-drawn cart.

Living Conditions

4. "The impression one has is that living conditions in Estonia are still better than in the other parts of the USSR. Nevertheless, by autumn 1953 almost all food prices had risen to the same level as before the price cut following Stalin's death. There have been no changes in wages; the bulk fluctuate between 500 and 600 rubles monthly. There are queues in front of all shops; all goods are in short supply and one has to buy whatever one can get hold of. The people are mostly silent and avoid talking publicly in groups.

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5.

[] the port of Tallinn. The harbor area is separated from the rest of the town by a barbed wire fence. Armed patrols of three walk the streets in the neighborhood and strictly check the documents of all passers-by. One can enter the fenced-in area through one gate only.

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6.

[] a large dock is being built in the harbor area. [] could not tell the tonnage but [] it would be able to take three 'large' (?) ships at a time.

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7.

"Foreign, i.e. Satellite, seamen who have no definite official business in town may not leave their ships. They can walk about on the gangway only and on a strip of quay along their own ship. On every foreign ship there is a Soviet military sentinel who strictly sees that these regulations are obeyed.

Airfields

8.

"Since 1948 work has been in progress on the enlargement of the former military and civilian airfields at Lasnamäe and Ülemiste. At first German POWs were used for this purpose, but only off and on as at the time more attention was being paid to the rehabilitation of the harbor and the clearing of rubble in the town. In 1950 this task was taken more seriously and earth works were started to connect both airfields. The distance between the two is about three kilometres. As a first step work was started on a road leading from one to the other. This road is so broad that four trucks abreast find room on it. The idea is that planes can be moved along on it from one airfield to the other. Parallel to the road a railway is planned for trolleys (hand cars) and motor cars running on rails.

9.

"In summer 1953 the road link was finished. It has been put into use but only for military purposes. Civilian traffic is forbidden on this road and the streets of the neighborhood. The civilian population is removed from this quarter and even from the streets crossing the road, such as Suur Raevalla, Sojamae and Kuuli.

10.

"The land and buildings of the Sõjamäe estate have been requisitioned for the enlargement of the Ülemiste airfield. Some of the buildings have been torn down; others are being used by the administration of the airfield. Quite a number of buildings and hangars have been erected both on the military and the civilian airfield. The largest of these is the building of the MVD military guard. Its duties consist in guarding the airfields and the former rolling stock plant Dvigatel, the regulation of traffic and the control on the new road between the two airfields as well as the streets crossing it.

11.

"The former Dvigatel works, which used to produce rolling stock, are now used as a repair workshop for planes.

12.

"In independent Estonia the so-called civilian airfield served mainly for sporting purposes, regular passenger planes landing on the military airfield. The regular passenger traffic now starts from, and lands on, the civilian airfield at Ülemiste. Nevertheless both airfields are subordinated to one and the same military command. In August 1953 their commander was Air Force Colonel (fnu) Semivnukov, a war veteran who has lost his left arm.

- end -

ENCLOSURE (A): Sketch Showing Expansion of the Ülemiste Airfield

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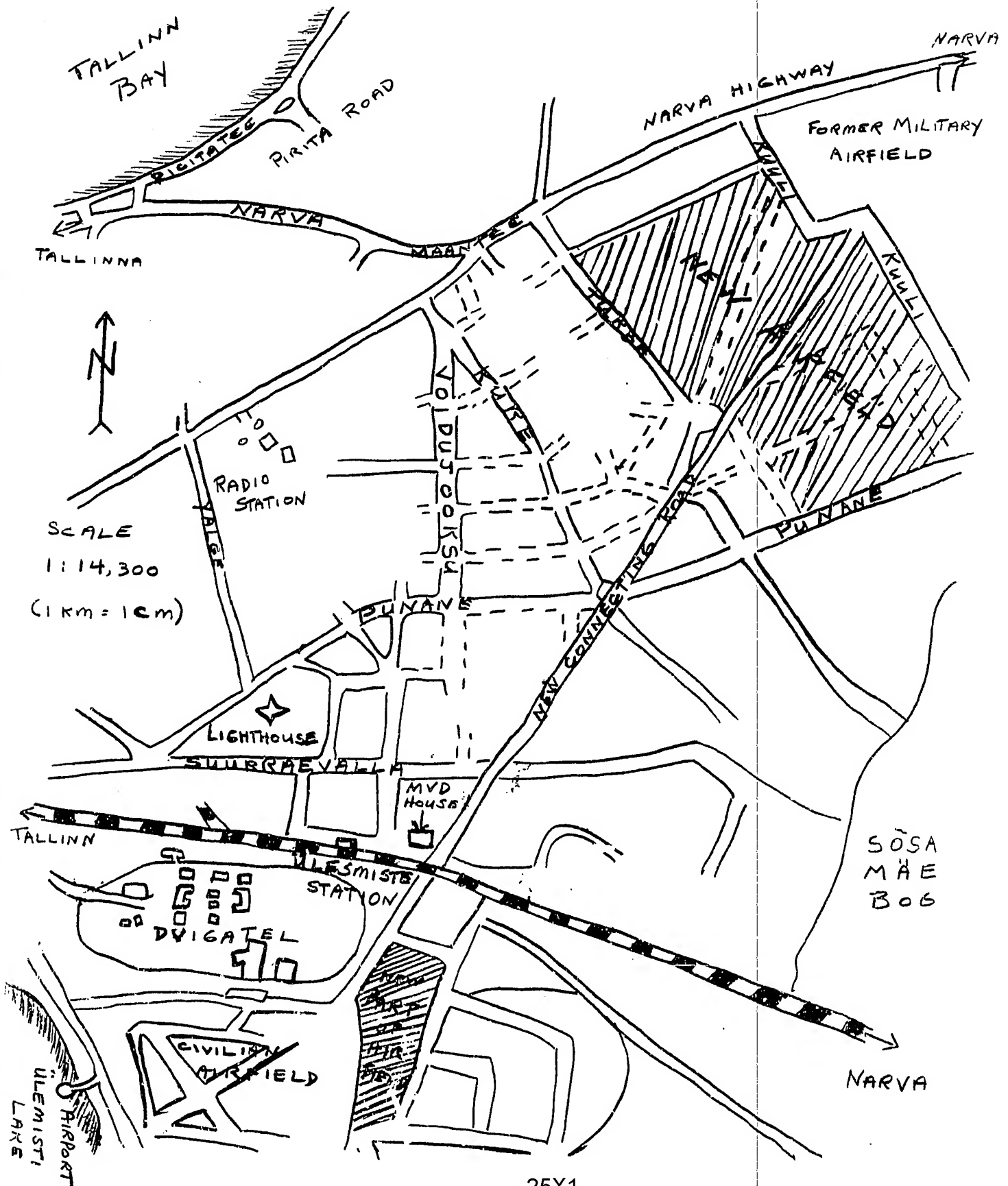
621.43	25M
781.1	25M
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451	25M

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ENCLOSURE (A)

Expansion of the Ulemiste airfield



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